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### Recital scheduled as part of John Lester scholarship benefit

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# University of Montana

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## MEDIA RELEASE

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Anaconda

RECITAL SCHEDULED AS PART OF JOHN LESTER SCHOLARSHIP BENEFIT  
MISSOULA--

Mezzo-soprano Esther England, soprano Joanna Lester and pianist Dennis Alexander will perform on Sunday, Jan. 16, at 8 p.m. in the Music Recital Hall on the UM campus. Proceeds from the program will be used to help establish a scholarship fund in the name of John Lester, a Montana-based vocal coach of international repute.

Art songs, arias and operatic duets by Mozart, Rossini, Puccini, Schubert, Wolf and Ives will be included on the program. Admission is \$2 for students/<sup>senior</sup> citizens and \$4 for the general public.

England is an associate professor of music at the University of Montana, where she teaches voice. She also directs the Opera Workshop and has served as musical director for numerous university and community productions. A former student of John Lester, England has performed with the Portland Opera and in Europe on a Fulbright Scholarship.

Joanna Lester, daughter of John Lester, has been performing opera for the past five years in Germany and Austria. A former Miss Montana, Lester has performed extensively in the United States in musical comedy and on television. In Montana, she has been a frequent performer at the Bigfork Summer Playhouse.

Alexander, who will be accompanist for the program, teaches piano at the UM and performs frequently in the western United States.

John Lester is a professor emeritus of voice at the UM, where he founded

(over)



RECITAL SCHEDULED-- add one

the Opera Workshop program in 1939. He lived and taught in Montana for nearly 44 years, and currently alternates between Montana and Europe, where he coaches professional singers. Former students of his presently appear in opera houses worldwide and teach in colleges and universities.

During his years in Missoula, Lester served as choir director at the Church of the Holy Spirit and was song leader for the Missoula Rotary Club.

Proceeds from Sunday night's concert will be combined with those from an upcoming Feb. 3-6 production of "The Medium," an opera by Menotti, to create the John Lester Scholarship Fund for UM music students. "The Medium" will be at the Front Street Theatre, with Missoula Children Theatre Director Jim Caron serving as artistic director, and Donald Simmons, chairman of the UM music department, as musical director. England and Joanna Lester will play the title roles of Madame Flora and Monica, respectively.

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